

A LESKERNICK DIARY

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This diary is based on notes taken during the course of the Leskernick project (12 - 22 June 1995) together with my recollection of events that led up to it. Most of it was written between July 1 and July 6 1995 in Dorset. The account of the final two days was written between September 15 and 19 1995 on my return from Vanuatu and escape from Salisbury hospital.

Leskernick: first impressions

My first visit to Leskernick was mid September 1994. This was part of a survey I was undertaking of the relationship between ritual monuments- stone circles, stone rows, cairns and wider features of the landscape. I had left this place until almost last because it was the most inaccessible of the monuments I had chosen to visit. I approached the place by following the track through Trezelland Farm. This was not very clearly marked and, losing direction, I found myself trying to cross and re-cross the Fowey with some difficulty. Eventually I emerged from the 'newtake' land onto the unimproved moor. The first objective was to find the southern stone circle. I looked out for rocks emerging from the grassland and, following several false leads, found myself on the western slopes of the Beacon. I realized now that I was in completely in the wrong place and decided to locate the cairn that would give me an orientation and reference point for both the southern and northern circles and the stone row. Working back from the cairn I found the southern and northern circles eventually, definitely the worst preserved and inconspicuous of those I had visited on Bodmin Moor. Even now I was not convinced that I had arrived and checked what I could see on the ground of the southern circle against John Barnatt's plan. Everything fitted. I stood in the circle, orientating myself with a compass, I observed what major tors I could see in different directions. It was a sunny and breezy day. I walked back to the cairn and then tried to locate the northern circle. For this I had no plan apart from a tiny thumb-nail illustration in the Johnson and Rose volume, and nothing had been published about it apart from this. In the end, I had no difficulty in locating the northern circle, pacing in the appropriate direction and distance from the cairn. I recognized it primarily by noting the similarity of two stones with others from prehistoric monuments on Bodmin Moor- sunken areas around the base, and pronounced clumps of turf around the base of the stones. I noticed a massive recumbent stone in the middle but was uncertain about whether this was a 'grounder' or a fallen central stone. If the latter it would have

been most impressive indeed. Having found the northern circle I took my observations and returned to the cairn and had some food and drink. Lacking any information about the northern circle I still felt a certain unease as to whether I had really found it. Repeatedly staring at it from the cairn it became clearer and clearer as a true circle to my mind's eye, and my worries were dispelled. In the distance I could see a lone horseman cantering across the moorland to the east, followed by two dogs. He was bare chested in the sun. This was the only person I had seen since leaving the road, and I felt somewhat uneasy. His presence broke the solitude of the moor and returned me to the 'present' from having been in the 'past'. The isolation of Leskernick had attracted me, nothing except moorland and rocks visible for miles around. This isolation, this absence of people, had given me a sense of going back into the past and yet, of course, the circles had been used and the settlement was nearby. I could see the settlement area from the cairn- a massive tangle of stones and decided to avoid it. It seemed impenetrable, aloof, impossible to investigate compared with the stone circles and stone rows where I had a methodology and knew what I was to investigate. Next was the stone row. I knew it was very close to the barrow and yet I could not see it. Looking at the plan in Johnson and Rose locating the terminal setting of three recumbent stones was the obvious starting point and then following it east. I gradually traced the stone stumps down across the plain, across a leat, and then to another. Walking back and forth in a straight line with, in places, little that was obvious to guide me proved difficult. Disappointingly, the row ends didn't point to any landscape feature in particular. While the row ended near to the cairn and between the two stone circles it was not directly orientated to them. It led up to and ended at nothing. Having been almost constantly walking for about four hours I was fairly exhausted by this stage but decided to check if the row had any perspectival effects, when one followed it in the landscape. Walking from the terminal setting to the eastern end nothing of any note happened except the land dropped away slightly. Walking back again towards the cairn I made an exciting discovery. Just at the point where the row crossed the second leat, Rough Tor came into view as a blip on the skyline and became clearer and clearer, larger and larger as I approached the terminal. This crossing of watery ground, marking the transition point, at which Rough Tor could at first be seen exhilarated me and made the whole afternoon seem worthwhile. Crossing water and the view of that distant Tor steeped in myth and ancestral associations, with its Neolithic enclosure were linked together. Although now a modern leat this must have been a small stream, or at least boggy area during the

Bronze Age. I felt an immense satisfaction of having cracked the code of this stone row and checked and re-checked this observation. Finally I decided to walk between the cairn, stone row terminal, and the northern circle noting here that Rough Tor disappeared from view at the point at which the northern stone circle was entered from the south. I did not visit the settlement but returned home. Leskernick Hill and the stone circles had been somewhat disappointing to me: the latter because of their invisibility, the former because despite the fact that it was an unusually stony hill, with massive clitter spreads, there was no dramatic Tor to compare with others I had seen on Bodmin Moor. It did not really fit the general pattern that I had noticed of stone circles with very dramatic craggy Tors to their north or east. However, Leskernick stuck in my mind as a special place because it was the only area on Bodmin Moor in which a stone row and stone circles were in very close proximity to each other, and to a settlement site and a large cairn.

The second time that I visited Leskernick was on Thursday 12 January 1995, immediately before term began. I was in the final stages of writing my Bodmin Moor paper and was primarily interested in visiting cairn locations. Early in the morning I had visited Bearah Tor and then drove to Bolventor and visited Catshole Tor. From here I walked to Brown Willy and along its ridge top south to north and then decided to visit Leskernick once more and re-check my previous observations and take some photographs. From Brown Willy I walked back to Catshole Tor and from there to Codda Tor. From Codda Tor there was a dramatic view of the expanse of the Leskernick settlement area and the field boundaries were very pronounced. It was a sunny day with long shadows making even faint topographic features far more pronounced. It was from here that I took my first photographs of the Leskernick settlement which, for the first time, made a real impression on me. I descended from Codda to the Fowey and wandered up into the jumble of clitter of the western settlement area. On the ground I observed little of the field boundaries or the hut circles, eventually stumbling across hut 20 with its massive backstone that would have been hard for anyone to miss. The sheer size of this stone impressed me and I leant with my back against it (which everyone entering this hut does), and looked out at the view, across the Fowey valley and towards Codda. On my way round the hill to the stone circles and the stone row I recognized and photographed a few other huts with their backs to the hill and their entrances facing out towards the direction of the ceremonial monuments. The ground was incredibly waterlogged and the vegetation much lower than in the summer, and the monuments much easier to locate. I crossed and recrossed the

first leat to the east of the stone row, confirming my earlier observations, entered the northern circle and from there walked for the first time to the top of Leskernick Hill, locating the massive cairn on top of it. I became very excited by this exercise because I realized for the first time that Rough Tor was invisible from the entire eastern settlement area and that the large cairn was right out of site of the settlement on the very top of the hill. Going out of the settlement and up Leskernick Hill the entirety of the Rough Tor ridge, together with Showery Tor, gradually came into view. It was only from the top of Leskernick Hill, near to the large cairn, that the expanse of the surrounding landscape could be seen and appreciated but the settlement was tucked away out of sight on the southern and western slopes of the hill. This was probably the first time that the idea of excavating at Leskernick occurred to me and the stone row terminal end, with its intriguing perspectival effects in relation to Rough Tor, was of particular fascination. I descended the hill through the western settlement area passing hut 20 again and took pity on a solitary wind-blown hawthorn tree eaking out a solitary existence on the lower slopes of the hill among the clitter spreads. Why should anyone want to live in this desert of stone?

Further thoughts and preparations

My desire to want to excavate was prompted by the intense interest and fascination Bodmin Moor had generated for me: the romance of discovery and the unknown. There was also the more pragmatic question of the relationship between the ceremonial monuments, cairns and the settlement. Which was constructed first? My own initial thoughts on this, prompted largely through a reading of the available literature, most particularly Burl and Barnatt, was that the stone circles and the stone row were the earliest monuments, of probable late Neolithic date. Later during the early Bronze Age, Bodmin Moor was permanently settled for the first time and associated with this settlement phase the larger and smaller cairns were erected. The smaller ones probably covered simple cremation burials, the larger ones such as the cairn on the top of Leskernick Hill were the foci for a whole series of ritual events involving burning, deposition, the construction of stake circles with entrances, dedication burials, the final act of which was the sealing of the ground and the covering over of the traces of all these activities by cairn construction. The events at the cairns may have been of a similar nature to those taking place at the stone circles, or they may have complemented or substituted for and replaced them.

My initial thoughts were to dig a whole series of 1 m sq. test pits at the stone row terminal, in the stone circles and in a few hut structures in order to obtain a series of quick comparative

observations of any trace of human activities and material for radiocarbon dating. It must have been during the first week of term (15- 20 January 1995) that I talked to Barbara and Sue and tried to interest them in a project at Leskernick. Both seemed to be interested straight away (although each was somewhat suspicious of the other, perhaps especially because they were only slightly acquainted), and especially in doing a survey of the settlement. The excavation, rather than the settlement survey, was my own primary concern as I was convinced that very little was to be gained by looking at the huts and the tangled jumble of stone on Leskernick Hill filled me with trepidation. It was somehow the equivalent of a tropical jungle, with stones substituting for trees, in which the huts looked like stones and the stones like huts, a seamless web of the cultural and the natural. It occurred to me we would be lucky enough to find the huts, let alone do anything with them.

I worked extremely hard with my Bodmin paper as I wanted Barbara and Sue to be able to read it. By February 7th I had finished it and on this day sent a copy to Nicholas Johnson of the Cornish Archaeological Unit together with a covering letter saying that I was interested in digging at Leskernick and asking for any advice or comments on the paper. Nothing happened and after six weeks or so I became increasingly despondent interpreting the situation as the CAU not wanting anyone disturbing them on their patch of territory. For me it was very much as if the past of Britain had been carved up and controlled with county archaeologists establishing their own personal fiefdoms. In mid March I tried ringing to Nick Johnson but was unable to talk to him. Instead I managed to talk to Peter Rose who informed me that Peter Herring had read my paper, had liked it very much and made lots of comments. Was this really the case, or was I being headed off and deflected?

I took Sue to visit Leskernick on Saturday 18 February: my own third visit. We approached via Catshole and Codda Tor, looking at the cairns. I had also been interested in putting some test pits around a Tor in the hope of finding Mesolithic and later votive offerings. It was a windy and extremely cold day and we sheltered beneath the rocks of Codda looking out at the expanse of the Leskernick settlement in the distance. Sue had brought her trowel and poked around in the peat at the base of the rocks in a cursory manner. We descended to the Fowey valley and approached the ceremonial monuments. She noted that I walked in a very different way from her, striding across the land with my eyes fixed on some distant point while she tended to have her eyes on the detail of the ground much more. I had never thought about the way in which I walked before and no one had ever

commented on my 'style'. But, of course, different styles of walking produce different sensory and somatic experience of movement between places and we were moving from tor to tor. Sue seemed impressed that my ideas about the stone circles and the stone row in relation to landscape features actually worked rather than being purely the product of a fertile imagination. I vividly described the delights of test pitting. The trowel emerged again and was prodded into the turf of the southern stone circle. Sue remarked on the difficulty of removing the vegetation layer and did not seem over-enthused. I felt a bit embarrassed at the diminutive nature of the monuments I was showing her. 'You see here is the stone circle: you can see a stone there, and another one over there'. The ground was incredibly soggy and much to my delight the stone row was more visible than normal: a series of low lumps stretching away into the distance. The wind was whistling across the plateau and we went up into the eastern settlement and attempted to find some shelter in a hut circle, crouching close to the ground and eating sandwiches. My ears were beginning to hurt in the blistering wind. Inside the hut circle I enthused about the possibility of test pitting there also. Sue seemed very keen on the idea of a settlement survey. She said that this was just the kind of situation in which you needed a team of people. For one person the task was obviously impossible. By contrast, she only mentioned the difficulties of excavating, which began to make me feel irritated. She also raised certain practical questions such as: where was the money coming from to fund it all? and how on earth did I intend to get heavy excavation equipment up to a site in the middle of nowhere and miles from the nearest road. In a roundabout way she was clearly hinting that the whole idea of excavating was just a little bit crazy. To me the settlement still remained a tangle of rocks: the stuff of nightmares. We had with us a very small-scale plan of the settlement and I suggested we look for the small cairns along the eastern boundary of the settlement and some more huts. Half an hour of this, with little success, in the penetrating wind was sufficient and we went to Jamaica Inn for a stiff whisky before returning home.

At the IFA conference in Bradford (12-13 April) I had a good moan to Colin Richards and Mike Parker-Pearson about the whole situation. This was the first time I had tried to dig anything. The CAU had not responded, the whole archaeological establishment was against me etc. etc. They pointed out the difficulties of excavation. Would test pits be any good? If you dug a pit in the middle of a stone circle and found some material for radiocarbon dating, what activity would it date anyway, and who would pay for it? Generally you found nothing in stone circles

anyway and if the monuments were scheduled it would be virtually impossible to get permission to excavate. Possibly the CAU had not responded because the project 'design' was so hopeless. Coming back from Bradford I thought that the whole project was probably misguided. It was now far too late to obtain any funding for it, no permission had been sought from anyone. I had no idea who the landowner was or who the commoners were from whom permission had to be sought. I did not know whether the monuments were scheduled or not. I thought that, at the very least, we might be able to do the settlement survey anyway, perhaps comparing Bodmin Moor with Dartmoor, something which Sue and I had discussed. Surely no one could object to a few people wandering around Leskernick Hill for ten days? I was also aware that Barbara had recruited various students and they had to be informed very soon whether or not anything was going to happen and when, and how.

My thoughts were increasingly turning to arrange an alternative project looking at the ritual monuments on Dartmoor and I arranged a meeting with Barbara on 4 May 1995 (the first week of third term) to perhaps think about other possibilities.

Just before the meeting with Barbara a letter arrived from Cornwall. My manuscript had been sent back with page after page of different comments and criticisms from Peter Herring. He concluded by saying this was the most interesting thing that he had ever read on the archaeology of Cornwall and had entirely altered his perspective on Bodmin Moor. This was fantastic coming from someone who had such an intimate wealth of knowledge of the area. The Dartmoor idea was dropped and Barbara and Sue and I discussed dates for going down and talking to the CAU people in Truro. We decided on a date for the project and I sent out a note to the students telling them it was on and asking them whether they still wanted to come. Later on Sue, rather pedantically, I thought, pointed out that I had not dated the note and that it was exam time and people wouldn't be checking their pigeonholes that frequently.

I met Sue one Thursday evening after work to discuss the excavation plans. She reluctantly agreed to direct the excavation but pointed out very firmly that she did not want to spend all her time stuck in a trench. She talked me out of placing test pits all over the landscape and we decided to concentrate on just one monument and excavate it properly: the terminal end of the stone row. I missed my last train home and had to spend the night in my room in college. Going to bed was a simple matter. I just lay down on the floor, fleeing from the cleaners early next morning to Euston station to get some breakfast.

We spent the night of 21 May in Barbara's beautiful house in Branscombe discussing the project and what we should say to the CAU people about it. Jan, Barbara's partner, was not at all grumpy, as he had sounded over the telephone. Sue was probably expecting some double-headed ogre! Peter Rose had intriguingly said on the telephone that Peter Herring on a recent visit to Leskernick had made a new discovery and that all would be revealed at the meeting. The plan was to visit Leskernick after the meeting in Truro and I gave Barbara strict instructions not to give the impression that she hadn't even seen the site she was proposing to investigate!

We arrived in Truro exactly on time for the meeting, much to Sue's amazement. Being herself an extremely meticulous person she has always given me the impression that I and all the other members of the Anthropology department at UCL are extremely chaotic, incapable of organizing a piss-up in a brewery, and that it is amazing that anything gets done. The 'Otherness' of this supposed chaos, as opposed to the rigid disciplinary structures of the Institute of Archaeology, obviously fascinates her. One could easily set up a rather neat (idealized and probably unfair) table of oppositions between the two institutions: formality v informality, inflexibility v flexibility, objects v people, measurements v imaginative insights, talking at v talking to etc. We meet Nicholas Johnson, Peter Rose and Peter Herring, outlining the plans for Leskernick. I rather defensively ask if there is anything they would object to us doing and would there be a better place to work on Bodmin Moor. They are incredibly helpful and supportive and don't mind us doing anything so long as it is done properly and we get the necessary permissions. Peter Herring comes out strongly in support of Leskernick as the best place to work on Bodmin Moor and reveals his recent discovery: a possible long barrow to the east of the southern stone circle aligned with a quoit-like structure on the top of Leskernick Hill. Through a gap in the rocks it is possible to look directly down onto the stone circles, the stone row and the new barrow structure. Peter shows us slides and thinks the alignment may be deliberate and possibly related to the solstice. I remain a bit dubious. We discuss maps, plans, diagrams and are given the names of people to contact: Dave Hooley, the English Heritage Officer responsible for scheduling the monuments on Bodmin Moor, one of the Commoners, people at the Royal Commission in Exeter etc. etc. My thoughts about an exclusionary CAU fiefdom over the past are dispelled and I feel a bit guilty about having them. We are all very impressed by the efficiency and hard work that the CAU do.

We drive back from Truro and take the public footpath to Leskernick. I have never before approached the site from this

route and am a bit frightened of getting Sue and Barbara lost and looking foolish. It turns out to be a much better and shorter way to the site than approaching it via Catshole and Codda. I'm a bit worried about Barbara's impressions. Having so vividly described to her the stone circle and stone rows I wonder whether she won't be a little disappointed that they can hardly be discerned on the ground. I have previously warned her that it is a little less spectacular than Carnac. We visit the monuments and the settlement and I describe various landscape features to Barbara. Sue stands for a long time at the end of the stone row taking various measurements. It is only later that I realise that she is trying to plan where the trench should go. Barbara only seems to get really keen when we enter the settlement area and look at some huts in the eastern settlement area. We all remarked on all the stone. Why would people choose to live here when below the settlement area was the much flatter stoneless plain. Functional reasons sprang to mind: freer drainage on a slope, the proximity of building stone. But the most pertinent reason of all seemed to be the ideological significance of stone to these people. To live amongst the rock was to live amongst the spirit powers of the place. We walked to the top of Leskernick Hill, examined Peter Herring's quoit and descended to the western settlement and into hut 20 again. Barbara and Sue get really excited about it but my enthusiasm has waned and I look out once more at the impenetrable jingle jangle jumble tangle of stones.

We see Leskernick Farm in the distance and think that it might be a nice place to stay as an alternative to the camping site that I had used on previous visits to Bodmin Moor. A landrover is parked outside: someone is obviously in and we decide to see if the house might be rented. A porch door is open and in the dim recesses we can hear the murmur of voices. Noone seems to want to knock. We peer through an unshuttered window, see an interior of cobwebs and mildew and decide we don't want to stay there anyway. At this point a red-faced man emerges and a faltering conversation begins. We're informed the cottage is not to rent, that it used to be a mine director's cottage in the eighteenth century when they were streaming for cadmium along the Fowey valley below. The miner's used to camp out. I say we have been looking at the Leskernick prehistoric settlement and the owner informs us he dislikes archaeologists and that a sociologist from Exeter university lives over the way whom he does not like either. We keep quiet about our intentions and escape. Might this be the person who owns the land or a commoner who wouldn't want us on it? We then visit the Colliford Tavern camping site and decide to stay there, negotiating a price with the owners.

Things must really move now. It is 22 May and the project is supposed to begin in three weeks and we have no permission from anyone except the general blessing of the CAU who have said they'll fully support us. Practical matters come to a head. What are we going to eat on Leskernick Hill during the day and who will provide the food? Tea and coffee? Water? As regards the latter, I suggest the Fowey but Sue and Barbara aren't too keen on potential dead sheep in it. Toilets? It is a wide open landscape without a single tree. Moreover people are going to be constantly scanning it for landscape features: few discrete places out of sight! We decide that we'll provide lunch for the students and tea and coffee will have to be brewed on a meths camping stove on site. Some kind of beach windbreak structure could act as a mobile toilet on the moor. We subdivide labour. Sue is to contact Dave Hooley and English Nature (Bodmin Moor is a designated SSSI) and compile a list of excavation equipment, I should contact the Commoners and write again to the students giving full details: dates, things to bring, how to get to Bodmin. Barbara is to get the RCHME settlement survey map and to get details of coaches from London to Exeter. I hate telephoning people, even if I know them well, and have real hang ups about contacting the Commoners. If they say no then the excavation is off, irrespective of whether the site is scheduled or not. Perhaps they have to have a meeting which will be impossible to arrange before the project is to start?

I ring to a Mr. Goodenough, whom I have been told by CAU knows who owns the land. He is one of the Commoners and says he has no objections to the project but that I should contact Mrs Dowton, their secretary. Mrs Dowton seems both interested and supportive and says that I must write to the landowner's agent, Mr. Wakeham. As time is so pressing I telephone him but he won't give me permission over the telephone. I must write formally to him and he says he does not want 'English Heritage down on his head'. Meanwhile Sue has found out that the sites are not scheduled and that Dave Hooley is incredibly keen and supportive and promises not to schedule them for some time. I write to Wakeham telling him this and ask Peter Rose and Dave Hooley to write letters of support for the project. Two days later, to my relief, he sends the letter giving assent adding that "I am surprised that Mr Hooley is offering such unqualified support. It is my private view that today's archaeologists are yesterdays grave robbers and such sites should be left undisturbed" Could this be the archaeologist hater we had previously met at Leskernick cottage? Dave Hooley sends me a copy of his letter that is incredibly supportive- not what I had expected from someone working for English Heritage (I obviously have a very stereotyped archaeological role model view of the world and what is to be

expected from people working for various organizations, and am delighted to have been proved so wrong).

Sue expresses some concern about the high proportion of women on the excavation (c. 75%), as regards heavy tasks. This had not crossed my mind but personally I was delighted that there were going to be so few men as it would be a corrective to the normal situation and we could avoid hopefully the macho digger types that so frequently seem to be attracted. She gives us her list of needed excavation equipment beyond things she has not got access to herself. It is now about ten days before we are to begin. Barbara and I go through it: things I should get, she should get and things that must be borrowed (hopefully from the CAU). Most of the list, fortunately, consists of basic gardening equipment which we already have. Mattocks were on it but we decided that my pickaxe and pointed spade would suffice instead. I would make drawing frames and Barbara said that Jan might be persuaded to construct a toilet (windbreak) and some pegs. In between final examination marking the next days are spent visiting builder's merchants and iron mongers in Shaftesbury buying wood for pegs, six inch nails, buckets, hand shovels, sieves and a multitude of other items. Every self-respecting archaeologist should possess a trowel. Perhaps I did once, very long ago? I go out and buy a shiny new one.

I also had to go to my house in Wales on Saturday 3 June in order to collect my garden tools for the excavation, wheelbarrow, fencing posts and fencing that were all stored there. The fence posts were left overs from compost bin construction, the fencing a failed attempt to prevent my late sheepdog from roaming at will around the Welsh countryside. It was with some trepidation that I went to Wales as I had recently started renting out the cottage and did not really want to see what horrors the tenants had done to it. Perhaps wearing dark glasses so that I couldn't see too much damage was the answer. On Friday night I parked my car outside the flat in Shaftesbury in the street in order to get a quick start next day. Early on Saturday morning I discovered that someone had kindly smashed in the back window which was completely opaque with shattered glass crystals. There was a clear percussion hole made by some blunt instrument in the right hand corner. Pure vandalism. It must have been the group of Shaftesbury vandals reported in the local newspaper as having attacked the local war memorial three times in as many months, much to the horror of the rotary club. The attack certainly didn't seem to be making much of a social statement and seemed to be of a purely random nature (unless against car ownership in general): why choose my battered Ford Escort while ignoring the smart BMW next to it? I smarted with the injustice of it all. I pushed in the

central area of the window leaving a ring of broken glass around the hole and began to drive to Wales in the rain. It always rains in Wales and today was no exception with a welcoming cloud burst shortly after arrival at the cottage. Loading the car with a broken back window was an easy matter with the fencing poles and wheelbarrow handles jutting out of the back on my return trip to Dorset. The equipment was temporarily stored in my study which must have caused some amazement for the letting agents (currently showing people around the flat as I was due shortly to leave): books and papers interspersed with wheelbarrow, fence poles, pickaxe, spades and shovels together with residues of broken glass from the car window. It strikes me that this is a thoroughly antiquarian exercise: privately funded by three university lecturers, garden tools for equipment, no transport apart from my car and a converted ice cream van Barbara is to borrow, and two of the three directors of the project whose practical knowledge of excavation techniques might comfortably fit on the back of a couple of postage stamps. Still, as they say, where there is a will, there is a way. Hopefully.

The settlement survey preyed, like some lurking demon, at the back of my mind. What were we going to do? There had been little real thought or discussion about precisely what we were going to record, apart from the rather vague notion that we'd look at the views through hut doorways at landscape features and monuments. Something would have to be done, some formalized recording system would have to be devised. On Sunday 4 June I sat down, and for the very first time, looked in detail at a small-scale plan of the settlement area, counting the numbers of obvious huts and enclosures and devised hut and enclosure recording forms which could be copied in multiples and used on site.

There was the general problem of the lack of visibility of the stone circles and row from the settlement area. You literally had to scan the landscape and train your eyes until you could spot them. This wasted a lot of time and the monuments would be virtually invisible to an 'untrained' eye. This problem had been at the back of my mind for some while. My first idea was that we needed something like traffic cones that could be placed on every stone on the stone row and at the stone circles. What a dramatic and 'post-modern' transformation of the Bodmin Moor landscape that would make! But how would they be brought up to the site and anyway trying to explain to a Cornish county council road engineer why I wanted to borrow 300 odd cones wouldn't exactly be easy. The eventual solution was to take up bamboo canes and white material with which to make flags.

Sunday June 11th.

I drove down with Karin to the Colliford Tavern camping site arriving at 4.30 p.m. We set up my tent and unload the equipment. After this I suggest to Karin that we might go up to the site taking the wheelbarrow, fencing poles and chickenwire. We drive to the end of the lane by Codda farm and I point out Leskernick Hill, gaunt with stones, a couple of miles distant. Karin is wise enough to decline my offer of a gentle stroll with the wheelbarrow down a deeply rutted track and decides to return home. She was probably remembering a stroll on new year's day up Tolborough Tor cairn, in a biting wind, so strong you could lean against it in which she had cried out, in the sheer horror of it all, 'there must be a better life than this'. I returned to the camp site and waited for Sue and Ian to arrive. Around 6 p.m. they come in his incredible bronze banger which managed to remain more or less in one piece during the trip from Sussex. I had not met Ian before. All that I knew was that he was a trained surveyor, currently working for English Heritage, and was to help set up the grid for the excavation trench. Our initial encounter was a little on the frosty side, Ian didn't seem particularly communicative. He had given up part of his holiday to do this and loathed camping. I later learned from Sue that he had given her dire warnings about being involved with lunatics such as Bender and Tilley and that she must be mad to have anything to do with us. Ian also has a bad leg and we've got to walk two miles up and down to the site every day. He is also very hungry and has had very little to eat all day. We start to walk up to the site around 7.30 p.m. with the wheelbarrow loaded down with 2 m. long poles, sledge hammer and saw. I start out pushing the barrow which seems incredibly heavy. This is partly the result of a virtually flat tire (It hasn't been used for over a year). The first bit of the track is downhill with numerous boulders and ruts to negotiate. Then the first major hazard- a fairly fast flowing stream to ford, up another steep and boulder strewn slope, across a rutted plateau area, down to another stream and then winding slowly up over open moorland. By the time we are approaching the second stream I am almost ready to give up. Karin had rightly predicted that the 'stroll' to the site would become another new year's day nightmare. Ian must have warmed to me somewhat as he wrested the wheelbarrow and sped away over the stream and up across the moor as I helped Sue with the roll of ungainly chicken wire suspended on another pole. We were somewhat concerned whether the equipment might be stolen left exposed in the middle of open moorland. My initial thoughts were to hide it in a hut circle on the slopes of Leskernick Hill above the plateau area with the stone row. But by the time we had arrived at the site, which

took about an hour or more, everyone had ceased to care. Ian wheeled the barrow into the central depression in the cairn next to the stone row terminal and tipped it upside down. We leave the fencing on top, take a glance at the excavation area to be and struggle down off the moor in the dusk. Ian firmly reminds us on a number of occasions of his growing pangs of hunger. 'He gets very grumpy when he has had nothing to eat' (Sue). We return to the camping site only to find that they have stopped serving food but they recommend we go to Jamaica Inn where they kindly heat up some. Before entering the pub Ian fishes out an enormous bright yellow crooklock and attaches it to the steering wheel of his car. If I was a thief, I thought, I'd take the lock rather than the car. The day has been saved and I feel confident that if we have got the wheelbarrow and fencing up to the site, with many more people to help, there should be no problem with the rest of the equipment.

Monday June 12th

This is the day when Barbara and all the students are to arrive. I feel a bit worried about it all for two reasons. The first is that the calm will be shattered and there will be people to organize. All my previous work on Bodmin Moor had been an entirely solitary experience: one man without his dog, and now I would be sharing the landscape with others. I was worried about people rampaging across the moor, dropping litter and disturbing it in various ways. I was also worried about whether there would be enough work for everyone to do: might they just be standing around and getting bored? I didn't like the idea of having to organize and coordinate. Sometimes it seemed difficult enough organizing and coordinating myself, let alone others. Then there was the question of the weather. Bodmin Moor could be idyllic if it was warm and sunny but wind and driving rain would make it quite miserable and there was a complete lack of shelter, apart perhaps behind large boulders in the settlement area. Ian and I have the full camper's breakfast in the restaurant of the campsite. We are the only takers in a large dining room. We then go in to Bodmin to buy some supplies: food is needed for Tuesday's lunch: how much will twelve people eat? and Sue and Ian are missing some tent pegs. We fail to find an ironmonger in the centre of Bodmin or any place selling camping supplies but buy food in the new out-of-town supermarket for ourselves and the excavation lunch. While Bodmin does not possess any central ironmonger it does proudly have a 'surf-shop' despite being some considerable distance from the coast.

In the afternoon we go up to the stone row. Arriving at the cairn the wheelbarrow is still there upside down. It looks highly incongruous, a wheelbarrow in an expanse of open moorland, and

was especially so to me, as my memories of it were entirely bound up with trundling piles of stones and weeds around in it in my garden in Wales. Yet here was the same trusty barrow sitting in the heart of Bodmin Moor! The aim today is to decide precisely where to put the excavation trench before the others arrive and to put up the fencing. We find that the three stones making up the terminal are out of alignment with the rest of the row and discuss whether the excavation trench should be centered in relation to these or the row alignment. Our initial thoughts are that the stones have simply fallen over from their original sockets that must lie by the side of one of the short ends. We remain uncertain as to which end of the stones was embedded in the ground. In the end the centre of the excavation trench is centered on the row alignment. It looks somewhat odd and lop-sided in relation to the three terminal stones, being broader to the right (north) of them than to the south (left). We also notice for the first time, examining the ground very carefully, that it is uneven and lumpy around the stones with numerous small depressions and rises. So is this area of moorland as a whole. We are beginning to recognize a microtopography in what had seemed like a fairly flat and featureless area of moor. Animal depressions, relics of medieval and later peat cutting, of which there are numerous turf drying stacks, in the area? The next decision is as to whether the 15 m sq. trench should cover the area in which all three stones are lying or not. I am firmly of the opinion that the entire area around all three stones should be excavated. Sue and Ian do not seem to want to include any. They seem frightened of actually finding anything. After a slightly rancorous discussion, a compromise is reached in which one of the terminal stones is included in the excavation trench and the (basal?) end of another. I feel outnumbered and dissatisfied by all this but forced to accept it. Ian and Sue begin to lay out the excavation grid with individual pegs at 1 m. intervals. Ian and I manufacture pegs out of timber that has been brought up with the fence posts. There are some murmurs of complaint that the wood I've brought (1" timbers) is not really substantial enough. Sue has brought four of her own fairly massive 2" grid pegs that form the initial basis for the grid. These seem ridiculously thick and cumbersome to me but I'm told they won't be easily knocked over or dislodged, unlike my own. Somewhat grudgingly I begin to accept in my own mind that they have probably got a valid point. Right from the start a scenario seems to have rapidly developed into a me/them confrontation in terms of attitudes and approach, but they know what they're doing while I do not. The connection between power and knowledge becomes only too obvious. Next the fence poles are hammered into the ground, a much easier task than I expected, as

there don't seem to be many sub-surface stones, and the chickenwire is stretched around them with its base some way above the ground, and tied with string which proves, like the grid posts, to be somewhat too insubstantial and keeps on breaking. Typically the chicken wire is not sufficiently long and only covers three sides of the excavation area which remains open to the west and there are large gaps both underneath it below which any marauding sheep could easily pass, and it is not sufficiently high. The protection of the excavation site from the beasts of the moor is, only too obviously, of a purely symbolic nature. This amuses me, yet its impracticality remains a real concern. Sue and Ian refrain from making explicit comment on its obvious inadequacy. By now we are all fairly tired, very hungry, and feel ready to return to the campsite. The arrangement made with Barbara had been that she should pick up the students from Exeter and after setting up on the campsite we should all take them on an initial tour around the project area. But since we had started earlier than planned this no longer seemed as if it was going to happen. We started to walk away down across the Moor. Just as we were reaching the stream at the end of the unenclosed moorland we spotted a part of people carrying things and something was flashing white. Could it be Barbara and the others? We had not seen a single person at Leskernick all day. By this time I was so tired that I did not feel at all like going on a tour round the stone circles, row and settlement area and desperately felt like hiding. We sat down on an old turf drying platform and waited for the party to approach. Yes it was Barbara and the others and they were carrying with them bamboo canes, pegs, garden sieves, buckets and spades. What a weird sight, this file of slow moving people, carrying these odd materials, like Medieval pilgrims with staffs and offerings, wending their way towards us, across the middle of the moor. The flashing white object, a tarpulin, proved to be a component of the toilet. We went back across the moor, deposited the equipment in the cairn depression, and then went on a tour of the circles, stone row and settlement areas. While doing this I pointed out distant hills and tors to begin a process of familiarising people with landscape features. Again, I felt somewhat embarrassed that you could hardly see the ceremonial monuments but knew everyone would be impressed by the hut circles, complete with entrances looking out across the plain. There was a kind of contradiction here: you could and could not see the settlement fairly easily and vice versa for the ceremonial monuments. Ian had not come back with us but had walked back to the car and then onto Jamaica Inn where we picked him up. Back at the camp site the warm sun had brought out the midges in droves. An unpleasant hour was spent battling with them, while

eating cold vegetable curry (being too tired and lazy to cook) directly from the tin, before I retired to the bar and the others. I encounter A for the first time, can't face a constant barrage of talk and questions, and beat a retreat to Barbara and the others. Later I feel guilty because I don't want to alienate anyone.

Tuesday June 13

My task this morning is to drive into Bodmin early and obtain more wire for the excavation. A friendly traffic warden did not know of the existence of any ironmongers in Bodmin. I bet he knows the car parks inside out. After making a few enquiries I am directed to Hodges on the Wadebridge road. This seems a huge emporium. I buy masses of wire in coils and U staples as I do not intend to have to come back again for more. I can't wait to get up to the site and its frustrating to have to come to Bodmin again. At the stone row Ian and Sue are starting to deturf with others. Barbara has 'released' the other students and herself to walk around the settlement area and begin a process of familiarisation. Soon we have tea and coffee with water brewed on my methylated spirits camping stove. It took, as it always did, ages to boil the water which had to be put on at least twice for everyone to have a mug. The cairn (not a particularly comfortable place to sit) became a focal point not only for the storage of the excavation equipment in its hollow but for tea, coffee and lunch breaks. We all sat around the perimeter with legs dangling down into the hollow suspended above a mound of tools, wood, food and rubbish bags. Eating and drinking and smoking and talking over the dead. It became known as the lunch cairn. After coffee deturfing continued while Barbara, I and others began to make flag poles. The bamboo canes were rather rotten having obviously done yeoman service in a rather different capacity. We experimented with various flag sizes and then flag out the length of the stone row at intervals and the centres of the southern and northern circles. The ceremonial landscape is transformed. We can see it at a glance without straining our eyes. Pippa has gone up to try and find and flag the Beacon cairns. I follow her via Black rock. The Beacon cairns are very robbed because of stone wall construction but we eventually find them and attach flags to the adjacent wall. From the Beacon an entire vista opens out: the view is fantastic-across to Dartmoor to the east, to Stowe's Hill, Caradon Hill and beyond in the south. We go back and eat lunch in and on the lunch cairn, with flags fluttering cheerfully around us. Apart from us there is some other kind of life at Leskernick now. The flags on top of the Beacon are not visible from the lunch cairn, although the adjacent wall can be seen. Later we realise this is because of the wind direction. I have forgotten the bread rolls in my tent but biscuits, cheese, tomatoes, apples and ham suffice. Our standard

menu. A brilliant dog has arrived on site with Phil: it looks like 'His Master's Voice' depictions. After lunch Barbara takes a party out to start locating cairns along the boundary of the eastern settlement area and huts using the RCHME plan, which she has numbered up, and the descriptions. The major problem with this documentation is that no contours are shown- the map is a completely flat and featureless documentation and the descriptions of the huts so minimalist giving little more than a few basic internal dimensions. We have decided to place a numbered peg in the centre of each hut. I go with Pippa and Henry to try and find three small cairns to the north-west of Leskernick Hill. They are very well preserved, two with clear cists, situated on a flat area near the confluence of two streams. The northernmost cairn has an arc of small boundary lines adjoining it. They are well away from the settlement and ceremonial area at Leskernick and invisible from each. The only places these cairns can be seen is from the top of the Beacon cairns and the large cairn on the top of Leskernick Hill. They fit very well the general pattern on Bodmin Moor that the small cairns (less than 10 m diameter) are found in low-lying and inconspicuous locations, generally hidden away. Their location next to a stream confluence must have some especial significance: the place where waters mingle, a symbolic boundary. Pippa, Henry and I study the map of prehistoric settlement in the north of Bodmin Moor. From the ceremonial area at Leskernick one gets the impression of being in a fishbowl, the entire place being ringed by hills, in the middle of a space with its margins marked out for you. The views are not that extensive in any direction except down the Fowey valley to Brown Gelly in the south. Ringed, enclosed, safe. Other settlement areas of any note are a long way off and would have been mostly out of sight from that at Leskernick. We flag one of the small cairns and then walk up to the top of Leskernick Hill to its large cairn to check inter-cairn visibility with the three we have just seen. I think that this wandering around, although not seemingly immediately productive is incredibly important: places one has visited stick in the mind's eye, movement between them alerts you to changes in the topography and ways through the landscape. It is a brilliantly clear day. From the large cairn on the top of Leskernick Hill all the settlement area and ceremonial monuments are invisible. But on the skyline in every direction rings of cairns can be seen. It is all like Chinese boxes: at the widest scale of landscape cairns on the skyline (Buttern Hill, Bray Down, The Beacon, Brown Gelly, Tolborough, Catshole, Brown Willy, Rough Tor, Showery Tor). Then there is the more intimate scale of the settlement and ceremonial area at Leskernick itself. We walk westwards down the hill and find Barbara and the others and help in locating and numbering

huts. tea. After tea we go out to locate the cairns along the southern margin of the E settlement. Barbara has marked two with flags which prove to be false. We eventually find them all and a very well preserved cist. We decide not to try and locate cairn 5 up the hill and away from the others. Given the rocky terrain this could take several days in itself!

Meanwhile Ian and Sue have finished deturfing of the trench and completed the fencing. I am amazed at the neatness of the turf stack outside the trench, the obvious aesthetics of the straight lines and neatly numbered grid pegs. I remark on the professionalism of it all to Ian and Sue: 'It looks just like an excavation should look'. Eyebrows are raised. The toilet/windbreak, which everyone had declined to use, now serves as a door to this enclosed little world of the excavation. It looks highly incongruous: a green baize door in the middle of nowhere, little figures huddling behind it peering down at stone and soil. It is a kind of symbolic shutting out of the landscape beyond, the creation of another reality within the whole: internalised, dark and secret. Inside the door there is discipline: you cannot smoke in there, there are places one must not walk, lines, pegs tapes and objects which should not be disturbed. One door leads to another: Barbara has the idea of making a mobile door to carry from hut to hut so that we can more adequately frame our views from the entrance.

Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves. Barbara is getting more and more enthused and excited about the settlement, Sue seems less stressed about the trench now the turf is off and the grid in place. Later in the evening we all meet in the bar of the campsite and discuss progress and prospects. I hand out maps to everyone of the Leskernick area and some notes for the students about the potential meanings of the settlement that I had prepared at the same time as the hut and enclosure recording forms.

Wednesday June 14

The major aim today is to complete the task of finding all the huts and putting numbered pegs in place. Barbara has already started making preliminary observations about them as they are found: first impressions which Jill has done an excellent job in recording. Today I learnt the real significance of two items of archaeological equipment- the trowel and the mattock. Sue and Ian were very concerned that no mattock had been brought. The pickaxe and pointed spade, as substitutes, were woefully inadequate. They were going to make a special trip into Bodmin to purchase a mattock and at the same time buy some screws and angle brackets for the manufacture of the mobile hut door frame. I had already noted murmurs of discontent about the mattock. On

Monday when coming back from Bodmin I'd said there was no mattock to them. 'Did you hear that: no mattock, Ian' Sue had said in a rather shocked tone of voice. Ian did not comment but his silence spoke volumes. I regarded this mattock complaint as rather uncharitable: they were lucky to get the wheelbarrow, spades, fencing, sieves etc. Damned mattock. They obviously had some deep psychological hang-up about it which, no doubt, would be rationalised in entirely functional terms. For me the mattock, like the trowel, was a symbol more than anything else. Whoever used mattocks anyway, apart evidently, from archaeologists? I'd found no desire to have one for my garden. While Ian and Sue were away mattock hunting in Bodmin we went up to the site. Barbara went off to peg some more huts while Helen supervised Mary, Jill and myself in the trench. We started trowelling off the pea-grit layer around the fallen terminal stone. This was quite difficult work. I was determined to keep a nice level surface so as not to incur Sue's wrath while she was away. Eventually Sue and Ian come back, the proud possessors of a mattock with shiny blue blade. I had suggested Hodge of Bodmin but they'd bought it in Do-it-all. Ian heaped scorn on Hodge of Bodmin even purporting to sell ironmongery because they had failed to stock mattocks. His praise for Do-It-All knew no bounds. Mattocks provided an acid test by which all ironmongers were to be judged. Some of the rust that had been gradually accumulating on my new trowel was now worn away. I noticed how large it was compared with other trowels in use and was duly informed that all their trowels had started out this way. The more diminutive the size of your trowel the greater your status as an archaeologist since years of scraping were required to reduce the blade to an area little larger than a postage stamp. The trowel was a prized personal possession and a lengthy discussion ensued about the best place to carve one's initials or name on the wooden handle. This also would show signs of longevity- a sleek oiled surface produced by being pressed into the palm of a sweaty hand for months on end. Another quaint archaeological fetish. This ageing of objects through appearance and the clear relationship between use, time and status reminded me very much of Kula valuables but while these are given away it would be horrific for an archaeologist to give up a trowel as it was so obviously entangled with personal identity. I should have obviously spent several days gradually filing down the blade of my trowel before the excavation commenced. But even if I had done that the handle would have given the game away. Taken to its logical extreme, the greatest status symbol of all would be to have no trowel at all. How foolish I had been to purchase one! I reflected that the rather crude T that I had cut into the base of its handle did not demonstrate enough loving care. It surprised me

that Barbara, having spent ten years directing an archaeological project in Cumbria, seemed to have a similar lack of appreciation of the vital significance of the mattock and the trowel to myself.

In the afternoon, while mattocking commenced (this required a skilled mattock bearer), I managed to escape from the excavation to help in the settlement survey. There were still about 20 or so out of the 50 huts to locate. Barbara had, by now, developed a sophisticated methodology for hut location. You stood in a pegged and numbered hut, glanced at the RCHME plan to orientate yourself and walked or clambered across the boulder strewn slopes in search of its nearest neighbour. Occasionally this was successful. More often than not you had to return to the hut where you had started from and begin again. This in itself was no easy matter as the wooden pegs marking the huts rapidly became lost in the stones. Since every hut seemed to look much like the previous one actually being able to identify a hut, once one had entered it, was not particularly easy. The RCHME plan had a few brief annotated descriptions of huts, usually giving little more than internal dimensions, sometimes with mention of a visible doorway. Someone read out the description and we looked at the hut to see if it matched. This was usually the case as the descriptions were often so limited!

Walking back and forth and scrambling around in the rocks gave a great sense of achievement when a new hut had been located. It was a bit like treasure hunting. Having found the hut a numbered peg was solemnly hammered in the middle of its interior (H 23). This seemed a bit faceless. Perhaps it would be easier to remember them by names but the idea of Shangrila Hut, The Hawthorns or, perhaps, most appropriately, 'The Boulders' seemed equally unhelpful. The sole exception was 'The hut with no number' (a structure which the RCHME survey had located but not numbered in their descriptions). The final part of the procedure was to make a few brief descriptive notes of our own about each hut. 'Well preserved doorway, thick double walls with rubble core, internal subdivisions to left of door, large stone outside, fine view down Fowey valley. Mary commented that we sounded exactly like estate agents writing dubious particulars: 'newly converted, in need of a little repair, has the benefit of a porch and turf-fired heating'.

We had been using a compass to check door orientations and after tea Sue and Helen came up to join us in locating more huts. Having seen us stumbling around they decided the compass might well be employed to help us to find the right direction in which to walk. A seeming eternity was spent over working out how to use the compass to walk in the right direction. With this method we did find some huts, and the fifth cairn that we had almost given

up any hope of finding, fairly rapidly. But in other cases the compass proved a dismal failure with Barbara's tried and proven semi-random stumbling method proving far more effective. It was with a great sense of satisfaction that I found a hut before the compass did. The compass seemed to destroy all the spontaneity of the process and represented an intrusion of what was going on in the excavation trench into the world of the settlement survey. By this time I had developed a deep affection for the settlement, particularly the more rocky western settlement area, perhaps significantly, out of sight of the excavation trench, and a chasm was rapidly developing in my mind between what 'we' were doing on the settlement and what 'they' were doing in the trench. These rapidly became mirror opposites. The excavation was strict, formal, traditional, technological, disciplinary, limited, unimaginative. It began to stand for the kind of archaeology I hated. Work on the settlement, by contrast, was anarchic, unstructured, ill-disciplined, non-traditional, innovative. The excavation was worry, the settlement survey, a good laugh. Another thought crossed my mind: how similar Barbara and I were in approaching things, and how different to Sue. Neither of us would have even dreamed of using the compass to find huts, despite diligently carrying it with us: this was truly symbolic, at least the mattock and the trowels were actually being used for something! Looking at the map was about our high tide mark of technological sophistication. I later complained to Sue about the intrusive nature of the compass technology. By the end of the day we have found and numbered all the huts. Things are going well.

Thursday June 15

Today we walked to Leskernick via the Catshole Tor long cairn, Catshole and Codda Tors. I think this is vital in terms of familiarising people with some of the landscape features we will see later. We rest at Codda and gaze at the settlement and excavation areas in the distance. The field and enclosure boundary lines of the settlement seem quite clear and distinct from here as opposed to the stone jungle one is faced with when over there. Below Codda Tor is a small settlement area with huts, cairns but without any major enclosure boundaries, an open settlement compared to Leskernick. Henery, Cath and Jason have visited it and flagged one of the huts the previous day and they take us down to look at it. There are some curious solitary standing stones that seem to be placed so as to demarcate the edges of a dense, roughly rectangular area of uninhabited clutter. The hut entrances seem to face Leskernick. A small farmstead? Huts used seasonally by shepherds- but it is only a short distance from Leskernick? Some of the huts look quite substantial as do some of the cairns, marked clearance(?) cairns on the prehistoric map of Bodmin. The

difference between a cairn and a clearance cairn seems quite arbitrary and meaningless to me. By the time we get back to the project area it is almost lunchtime. We seem to be starting later and later each day. On my notes I had stated that everyone should be on site by 9.30 a.m. 10.30 is the earliest we have arrived. Anyway time does not seem to matter much. We just stay up there longer in the evenings and tea, coffee and lunch breaks have hardly been fixed. Indeed they are almost interchangeable. I like the lack of rigidity.

Mattocking and trowelling in the trench the previous day had exposed the first feature of any significance: a group of stones which Sue interpreted as the top of a timber post-hole setting. This was most interesting in view of the archaeological literature suggesting that in many cases timber settings had preceded stone settings in prehistoric stone circles and stone rows. Sue takes everyone to the trench and explains extremely lucidly how and why it was set up, the grid settings and what had been discovered so far. I was impressed by her talk and now felt I also had a better understanding of what was going on behind the fence on the moor. The new feature had to be photographed. Sue had requested that Barbara and I bring three cameras as part of the excavation equipment. Barbara had brought two instamatics which even I realised would be inadequate for excavation photography. I had brought a camera so complicated that I couldn't use it. The manual was like a bible. Fortunately it was also fully automatic with landscape, portrait, close-up and other settings and an infra-red beam which you could calibrate to your eye which would work out itself the direction in which you were looking. Failsafe. Sue, tactfully avoiding Barbara's cameras, wanted to know how mine worked. 'Oh for that feature just set it on automatic and press the button'. This certainly wasn't good enough and the manual had to be brought out. I dread to imagine what Ian, who looked ruefully at the camera, being used to good old pentaxes or something of that nature, was thinking. Even if I had got a camera with a mattock, trowel and spade setting it would, no doubt, have not sufficed. While the camera was being pored over by Ian and Sue Barbara and I began to construct the mobile hut doorway. What size should it be? Narrow as were all the hut doorways we had seen (c. 50 cm). The height was a problem. The shortest person on the excavation, Sue, was used as a model for the height but in stooping position. The reasoning being that people in the Bronze Age were shorter than us and that most hut doorway reconstructions we had seen were low. The idea of the Hamilton door was thus born. It only now had to be made. The screws Ian had bought were virtually as thick as the flimsy wood to be used for the frame. The only way to get them in was to

give up trying to screw with the end of my swiss penknife (the only screwdriver available) and use a sledge hammer instead. Ian glanced at this operation taking place, and then looked stoically away. These screws were for me another glaring example of the 'heavy-duty' archaeological mentality. Why buy fine grooved screws when you can get others half an inch thick? Barbara looked at the sledge hammer with some concern as it crashed down on the screws a short distance from her thumb nails holding the wood in place. The door having been made we leave to commence recording the views out of the hut doors. Initially Barbara and I talk to the students about the symbolics of space and the landscape. Then the 'serious' task of recording. Our door frame, when placed in position at the hut entrance, looks quite absurd, indeed somewhat surreal. Someone has to hold it in place, while another peers through it. You can see both through the frame and on either side of it. The latter is not permitted. Up to this point I've been gradually teaching people the names of the Tors and we have sat on the lunch cairn having naming sessions with me pointing to a Tor and them telling me what it is. The role is a bit shamanistic- revealing knowledge except that I can't tell them myths and stories (except my own personal ones) connected with the Tors and the real Bronze Age shamans could. Most of the students now know the names and soon everyone will be a shaman.

Once the entrance is in place the compass bearing is noted, Barbara takes two photos (B & W & Colour) looking straight out of the door and I do a video zooming in and out. Then someone crouches at the door and looking straight out records the names of the Tors and other landscape features visible, the ceremonial monuments (circles, row, cairns), more distant settlement areas such as Codda and those on the eastern slopes of Brown Willy, and the huts that could be seen. The doorway is then shifted to the left and the procedure repeated and then to the right. Immediately certain difficulties are encountered. First the hut recording form makes the recording more time consuming and cumbersome than it might be, requiring the continuous swivelling of the doorway from centre to left to right to back again since we record which distant landscape features can be seen to the centre, left and right, then all the other huts that could be seen, then the ceremonial monuments and cairns. There is also the problem of exactly how one is to look out of the doorway. Some way back into the hut, which makes the view more restrictive or right at the entrance. Alan, while looking through the door: 'Am I allowed to swivel my eyes?' Certainly not! They only looked straight ahead during the Bronze Age. I am much more into the fixed unswerving gaze than Barbara who maintains that I have a Wordsworthian view of

landscape. Next there is the possibility that some of the huts had external wooden porches, entered from the side, hence the looking through the frame to the left and right. Next since the hut recording form has been done from memory there are some additional categories of information to go on it such as the Codda settlement and the Carneglos area. These have to be written down afresh on each recording form and ticked off which all takes time. Finally there is the problem of some huts in front of the hut you are in, blocking all or part of the view straight out, to the left or to the right of the door. Barbara, deeply suspicious of the rigid blinkered Tilley gaze develops a new category 'standing around'. This takes the analysis of landscape one stage further. The ordinary Bronze Age hut dweller wakes in the morning rigidly gazes straight out, to the left and to the right of his or her hut entrance and we simulate what would have been seen. A slight swivel of the eyes is reluctantly admitted (simulated on video). Next she or he is allowed to stand, albeit in a fairly rigid fashion, outside his or her hut entrance and we simulate again what landscape features, monuments, other huts would have been visible. This leads on naturally to a consideration of Bronze Age personality types: those who constantly swivelled their eyes and those who did not, the nosy snooper, more interested in what was going on in the hut next door, than a Wordsworthian gaze towards the peaks of Brown Willy, the withdrawn hermit who might rarely venture out of their hut and the self-absorbed dreamer unlikely to see anything at all. The greatest practical problem in recording was the proximity of other huts blocking the view. We might start recording the view straight out through the hut doorway only to realise that another hut was immediately in front of it. This problem was resolved by people walking over to the other huts, standing on the walls, and becoming huts themselves. 'You go over and be hut 23 and I'll be hut 24' Which hut are you? O.K. Can you now go over and be hut 27' and so on. Looking out of the door in all these different directions, with people metamorphosing into hut walls took an incredibly long time. It might take an hour or more to record the views from one hut doorway and everyone was rolling around with laughter at the madness of it all. Barbara felt bound to point out to everyone, in a pedagogic moment, that this was, of course, a rather subjective exercise.

Having encountered these difficulties we decided to flag up each hut in the western settlement area this year and the whole lot next year to save time with some kind of bunting along the enclosure boundaries.

Weather would create difficulties. If the mist came down the exercise would be impossible. Wind was another problem. You simply couldn't hear what hut someone was supposed to be in if it

was any distance away. This had to be resolved by relay signalling of hut numbers from person to person to whoever was staring through the hut door. Finally since we had only put small wooden pegs in the huts it took ages to find the majority of them again before the exercise could even start.

Just before we leave the site in the evening after a solid day's hut recording I discover that I have lost my binoculars. I think they are probably left up at Codda Tor where earlier in the day we have been using them to look at Leskernick. I walk back that way accompanied by Henry, Pippa, Helen, Alan, Cath and Jill. We don't find them. Next morning I embarrassingly discover them at the bottom of my rucksack. On the way Pippa tells me about the Dongas moving across Dartmoor with hand carts towards Merrivale where she is to meet them at the solstice. Back at the campsite the midges strike with a frenzy. Numerous tactics are used to evade them: a especial organic lotion produced by Pippa that is effective for about five minutes, josticks which soon run out, continuous smoking, continuous movement, locking yourself in the tent or in a car or beating a retreat to the campsite bar. Ian and Sue sit in Ian's car and work out, by monitoring the windscreen, that there is a ratio of 95% midges to 5% mosquitoes. Whatever the proportion, everyone gets bitten to death and a fresh supply of josticks goes straight to the top of tomorrow's shopping list. Ian is to leave tomorrow so in the evening we all go out to the Indian restaurant in Bodmin for a meal. Having lived off camping fare the meal seems incredibly sumptuous, and it is rather odd to sit on a chair.

Friday June 16th

The weather today is dry but it is rather windy and cold on the settlement area. A mist is down in the morning obscuring the Tors but soon lifts otherwise hut recording would be impossible. We carry on hut recording. Shouting out the names of the Tors that can be seen straight out, to the left and to the right of the mobile door frame (sometimes only to realise later on that the view was completely blocked by another hut in front- in which case the exercise has to start all over again) begins to get a little tiring. Yes, it is the case that Brown Willy can be seen with tedious regularity. No doubt they had paintings of it on their hut walls! We decide (quite correctly) that some of the more miserable, small and dilapidated hut structures probably did not have a porch thus cutting down on the recording time. The excavation seems to be proceeding at a snail's pace and I am longing to see what is at the base of the stones. Sue and Barbara have had the idea of asking the students to compile a list of terms describing what they feel about the excavation work and the settlement survey which we get them to do at lunchtime sitting, as usual, on the cairn. We do it

too and it is surprisingly difficult. There is a general split between those who like the excavation best and those the settlement survey, which on one recording form is described as naughty!

The question of authority and power is discussed in Jamaica Inn in the evening, something with which I suppose that I am a little obsessed as I want the whole exercise to be completely democratic and everyone to feel an equal and valued participant in the exercise. However the excavation doesn't seem very democratic at all in this respect. The ignorant, including myself, are kept well away to minimise damage from certain areas. Strict and standardised recording procedures are in place, smoking is banned, the whole area is fenced in. There are sacred areas where one may not walk, innumerable forms to be filled in, straight pencil lines to be drawn. The context sheets in use only have three lines, symbolically, at the end, labelled 'interpretation' as if the rest of the process of excavation and deciding what is actually supposed to be a context is not interpretative. There is no place to acknowledge changing definitions of the contexts and changing interpretations of what it might mean as it is being excavated. Formality is substituted for process. I had fondly imagined that the settlement survey, by comparison, was a perfect model of pure democracy at work but in reality this was hardly the case. Henry pointed out that only Barbara and I are allowed to take the photographs through the hut door. There are the recording forms I have devised, categories that Barbara and I have put in place and there is the striving to standardization- every hut should be recorded in exactly the same way. The hut doorway view recording forms have no space for interpretation whatsoever! We come to the realisation that the difference between the excavation and the settlement survey is only a matter of degree. The process of finding the hut doorways, finding that other huts are blocking the views, what can be seen and what cannot, in many ways is identical to recording colour changes in the soil profiles of a feature. Helen mentions the possibility of making new context recording sheets that would allow an ongoing interpretative element, rather than this being assigned to the end so one can see how a conclusion is arrived at and how as the context is excavated new aspects of it raise fresh possibilities for interpretation and impugn former ones. Sue, in response to my remarks about the slowness of the excavation and its dominance by 'technological' procedures, points out that Barbara and I are not destroying anything. We can afford a certain degree of irresponsibility and there are no external bodies like English Heritage potentially looking over our shoulders with black lists of bad excavators. And, but not least, eyes are allowed to swivel on the excavation trench, a practice rarely permitted during the settlement survey.

Barbara tells us that the No Smoking signs in her room are becoming increasingly large, while a bold new sign 'Dogs on lead' (a response to the rabbiting activities of Phil's Jack Russell), has been freshly erected at the campsite entrance. We are beginning to have an impact!

Saturday June 17

We wake up to pouring rain and low clouds dragging their bellies across the landscape. It is hardly possible to see from one side of the campsite to another, yet alone the Tors. It is the type of weather that will continue all day making hut recording impossible and excavation miserable. The midges have retreated. I go into the campsite office to see if any messages have been left for me. Encounter the owner who asks me if they have done anything to upset us. I reply in the negative and inquire why she has asked. Apparently we have been spotted in Jamaica Inn and they don't feel that we have been using their facilities enough given that they have given us a discounted price on the campsite. We haven't been much into the bar and noone except Barbara is having the glorious camper's breakfast! I decide I will have to make an effort to have the latter every day from now on to reduce any potential ill-feeling and more bar revenue will have to be generated. Later in the morning Barbara, Sue and I sit in the car discussing future possibilities for the project. The windows rapidly steam up creating a cocooned environment. We decide to definitely continue next year with a small group of maximum 20 people with possibly two paid excavation supervisors, students alternating between the settlement survey and the excavation, to finish excavating the stone row terminal and to excavate a small cairn in the settlement area and one or two huts. We discuss possible publications- an interim report in Cornish Archaeology, publication of my initial piece there and later as an introduction to a book about Leskernick. The book, we agree, has to be a discursive text, firmly representing the whole thing- excavation and survey as a process rather than the usual distanced, massaged, formal narrative. We also talk about possible student dissertations connected with the project, integrating the new UCL M. Res to do a contour survey of the area and weekend trips to Bodmin during the autumn, sources of grants and funding. New types of hut recording forms are discussed and new 'technologies' such as a new mobile door with folding out side flaps and fluorescent flags marking every hut and cairn. Everyone, spontaneously, has lunch in the Colliford Tavern, which will hopefully satisfy them in the short term. We discuss what we have been talking about with the students, many of whom seem keen to come back next year. Mary has been rained out of her tent and will now have to sleep in the back of Barbara's van. The

zip having broken the first evening, she is not having much luck. In the afternoon we make a trip into Bodmin Museum which has a surprisingly interesting exhibition, even with an aerial photograph of Leskernick. Virtually no prehistoric artefacts, but some rock samples from Bodmin Moor which we look at to compare with some slate like stones found towards the top of the excavation trench. There is a particularly good, almost Bourdieuesque exhibit of the farming year in Cornwall together with old photographs of the Bodmin police and fire services etc. I decide I'll enjoy the exhibition rather than start to analyse and criticise it: switch off for a while. Outside the museum I catch Sue fondling her little trowel which she still has in the side pocket of her battered oil-skin jacket.

I have mentioned to various students about my days working in Hales cakes factory and sleeping, eating and making sponge cakes. They buy me a couple of enormous sponges in Bodmin market place! After the museum we have tea, purchase josticks and then return to the campsite. In the evening we all sit in Colliford Tavern- the owners should be estatic by now, and have a meal. Jan arrives and asks various empirical archaeological questions to which, of course, I don't know the answers. Before bed I construct a stone row of cooking pans and meths bottles outside the entrance to Sue's tent and wonder if she will notice it. She does and adds a terminal setting of nails- which I don't see until a couple of days later when modifying this construction by adding water bottles to construct a massive setting on top of hers.

Sunday June 18

The weather has cleared up nicely, so work is possible today. I go and have my 'compulsory' camper's breakfast with Barbara. It consists of bacon, egg, sausage, beans, half a tomato, tea or coffee, toast and butter but curiously does not extend to marmelade so Barbara has provided her own. The hut doorway recording continues. I am beginning to feel time pressing in. It is quite clear the excavation of the stone row won't be finished and it is unlikely we will be able to complete the huts either. It can take almost an hour to record all the details from a single hut- having first found it. In a way, recording what we can see out of all the hut doorways is preventing us from thinking about the meanings of the huts themselves. We are working on the unspoken assumption that all the huts are of the same date so temporality has been swiftly eliminated. Being obsessed with the view, the Western gaze, the 'real estate value' of various huts, in our minds, rapidly diminishes if another hut is in front of it blocking a vista to the Beacon or Codda Tor. We remain firmly entrenched in the present. There are no people and so far we only have two categories of hut occupants- ungended persons or cows. The

latter wouldn't require porches on their huts and only need to stare straight out of the doorways. But there is something else. I increasingly feel an emotional attachment to Leskernick Hill as opposed to other, now more alien, environments of Bodmin Moor.

Jan comes and sits in various huts watching the constant movements of the door frame, the calling of Tor names and hut numbers, and then wanders off up the hill. I am told, after a few hours, that I am needed to help out on the excavation, which I have more or less managed to avoid for a few days (Barbara hasn't dug at all so far, but has not been very critical of the proceedings). I interpret being dragged to the trench as some kind of punishment for having criticised it. I imagine that it will only take a few minutes to sieve a few buckets of soil but rapidly revise this impression when I am provided with a bucket of soggy peat, labelled 'Context 7' and told to sieve it through a mesh the size of pin-heads, ostensibly to check for microliths that I have suggested might be found around the stones. To my horror, after half an hour I have only managed to process a few spoonfulls of the vile peat and nothing is to be found in it.

Today is a visitor's day with Jan here, Karin coming and Keith Rae. Luckily after half an hour of sieving Keith comes and I can rescue myself from the task. Keith chats about the politics of Cornish archaeology, from his angle. He is apparently not getting on well with the CAU, who haven't told us that he is about to excavate at Bury Down in the south of Bodmin Moor and he has already conducted an initial field season there last year. This, despite a session in Truro, where we were informed about other work going on in the Bodmin area. He suggests that the settlement at Leskernick might have been seasonally occupied and part of a long transhumance route from the south coast. I don't believe this at all. When he has gone Barbara, Sue and I discuss the politics of working in Cornwall and decide we simply don't want to get involved in any of it and to studiously avoid getting dragged in. What KR has done to upset the CAU is unclear but it is probably to do with contract excavations in Plymouth- employing the wrong (i.e. not the CAU) people. As our excavation has no money involved with it at all this is scarcely a concern for us.

Karin arrives just before lunch and we go round the settlement area. To my amazement she says she finds it interesting. Jan also expresses an enthusiasm for the place and later writes a superb poem with Barbara reads to us on the final morning. Karin says it is interesting because of the domesticity of the hut circles. People were actually living here, going in and out of these doorways, looking at this landscape. Its more immediate and less remote than an earthen long barrow or a megalithic structure. It requires both less, and yet more, imaginative insight

to put the people back in- something we are not doing too well so far.

During the afternoon I am asked to plan some features in the excavation trench. Karin helps and it goes successfully until she leaves. After that I manage the considerable feat of planning a section back to front which is immediately spotted by Helen and Pippa who re-draw the section correctly. This is the first day I have spent most of the time on the excavation and it does provide some relief from shouting out 'Fowey valley and hut 20 straight out, Brown Willy and hut 24 to left' 'How many huts have we done today? Only three- another 34 to go'. Groan.

Monday June 19

I make another morning trip into the Bodmin Safeway to purchase salami, cheese, tomatoes etc. This early morning trip to obtain food supplies is occurring much more frequently than I expected. Mary comes with me as she wants to buy some eyedrops having hurt her eye on a tree branch some days back. We have breakfast in Safeway restaurant hoping that there are no spies from the Colliford Tavern camping site staff observing us. Making further efforts to appease the establishment, I have asked Barbara to explain my absence from the camper's breakfast.

The mists are down again today and it is rainily gently- and continuously. The type of weather to soak you completely before you realise it. Everyone is fully dressed in boots and rain gear. It is only possible to record hut intervisibility today, the Tors and wider landscape having completely vanished as if it was never there. Barbara and I have a talk with the students about space and settlements, a dialectic of agency and practice, habitus and structuration. The bizarre and comical nature of the task becomes evident with people fanning out to stand in huts or spreading out their arms to represent hut walls as the recording continues. Jane remarks: 'Can you imagine Giddens being the hut with Bourdieu looking out of the door frame past him?' Probably not! After some hours of hut intervisibility recording in the particularly difficult (because the huts are so numerous and closely clustered) western part of the settlement, we make an initial attempt to work out a recording form for the hut structures themselves. This proves quite problematic- how are we going to document stone shapes and positions and internal structures quickly but accurately. Part of the problem, it becomes quite evident, is that we don't yet know how to look at the huts and what might be significant or insignificant. Something about Leskernick reminds me of Lepenski Vir, I'm not quite sure what. It is to do with the aura, the feeling of the place and its emotional impact.

Sitting on the lunch cairn we discuss rain jackets. Someone remarks how highly visible and readily identifiable I am in my

bright blue rain gear. This leads me to reflect that everyone else, in typically British style, is wearing dull greys and greens. Barbour oil skin jackets, that I had always associated with a class of country living toffs I would not want to be seen dead with- the horseriding, hunting and shooting brigades, were particularly popular. In 'explanation' various people told me how hard-wearing and functional they were. A bit like being told, as an anthropologist, 'we do it like that because the ancestors told us so'.

During the afternoon we start experimenting with our new hut structure recording forms splitting into small groups, recording external and internal features. The results are not all that satisfactory. We find that there are large differences of opinion between us, new categories that need to be invented, and existing ones that seem irrelevant. After tea we give up this exercise and start looking at and following some of the enclosure boundaries rather than simply walking across them. In one we find a superb gap with an evident track which leads directly down, out of the western settlement area to a ford across the Fowey. This must surely have been a place for bathing, washing and gatherings during the Bronze Age. I have felt jaded with the process of hut recording all day. This little discovery, right at the end of the afternoon, brings the whole project and settlement area alive for me once more. Hut 3 is now, because of its large size, elevation and isolated location on the fringes of the western settlement, being regularly referred to as the shaman's hut. So we now have three categories of Leskernick occupants: human blobs, cows and a shaman. The settlement is becoming ritualized.

In the evening we try to sort out the project finances. Plans are also made for a solstice party. Money has been tight up to now but miraculously large sums emerge for wine box purchases.

Tuesday June 20

Barbara has to take Mary into Bodmin hospital today to have her eye looked at. The rest of us go up to the project area along a track that is now very familiar. The mists are down again so hut recording is going to be difficult at least until it lifts. Henry and Kath carry on following enclosure boundaries. Most of the others are now needed on the excavation. I go and wander around the western settlement area.

I decide to go and sit in hut 20 with its enormous whale-like back stone. This hut has the most impressive natural back stone opposite the entrance and was, I remembered again, one of the few I stumbled across and photographed on my very first visit to Leskernick. Having now got my eye in for hut spotting amongst the clutter it now seemed incredible that I had probably walked through four or five other huts on the way up the hill to it that day without even recognising them. Sitting in hut 20, the sheer

massiveness of the natural backstone continued to impress me. It must have been of great symbolic significance yet none of the other huts had comparable stones. I looked out across at the other huts in the western compound, now easily distinguishable because of the numbered white flags fluttering in the breeze. I noticed for the first time that a number of the huts had unusual large triangular shaped stones and thought it might be interesting to record which huts possessed them and where they were situated along the hut walls. I visited 22 of the huts, six of which possessed these triangular or pyramidal shaped stones. Two features became apparent: these stones were placed in the back wall of the hut directly opposite the entrance and were associated with niches built into the wall so that in most cases the double stone facing of the hut walls, with rubble core, was reduced to a single external face, formed by the triangular stone, at this point. The back of the hut, directly opposite the entrance, would be likely to be a place of considerable symbolic potency and power. The leap to thinking that these triangular stones and their associated niches might mark small domestic shrines was but a short one. I went wild with excitement at this breakthrough in understanding. The huts, now with domestic shrines and offering places in their back walls came vividly to life in my imagination and the vague feeling that I had had previously that the huts reminded me some how of Lepenski Vir became dramatically reinforced. But why did only some of them have these unusual pyramidal stones? Did only a few huts possess these shrines? Another feature that was immediately obvious was that there was no correlation between hut dimensions and the possession or non-possession of these shrine stones. Hut 20 had a pyramidal-shaped shrine stone but this was not placed along the back of the hut wall but to the left of the entrance, towards the rear. Here the enormous natural whale-rock forming the entire back wall of the hut made the provision of a large shrine-stone opposite the entrance superfluous. This might have been a structure with multiple shrines within it. Henry and Kath came up to me from tracing the enclosure boundaries and we revisited the huts paying particular attention to the back wall directly opposite the entrance. We made two fresh discoveries: (1) Other huts that did not possess a triangular-shaped stone possessed a large or unusually shaped stone and/or niche opposite the entrance in the back wall; (2) The large and isolated 'shaman's hut' originally possessed a triangular stone in the back wall opposite the entrance but this had been deliberately broken off with the fallen top part of the stone now resting in the hut interior. These discoveries made us much more receptive to the characteristics of the stone shapes along the remainder of the hut walls and made us realise that they needed to be recorded in

detail and that we would have to consider the possibility of damaged and broken stones. These discoveries and observations reinforced my emotional attachment to the western settlement area which we now knew, from the landscape survey, was completely out of site (with the exception of one outlying hut) of the eastern settlement area, the ceremonial monuments at Leskernick: stone circles, stone row and 'lunch' cairn. We could not recall any shrines or unusual stones in the western settlement area. Perhaps the western settlement did not possess any, was later than that to the east, built at a time when the ceremonial monuments had ceased to be used and ritual activities had moved into the domestic realm rather than being set aside, distanced, taking part at the circles which could be seen from many huts in the eastern settlement area? It now seemed possible to build a temporal model of Leskernick with ritual shifting away from the circles, which became abandoned, and into the hut interiors. At the same time the ceremonial monuments lost their significance, were shunned and abandoned and settlement moved to the western side of the hill out of sight of the past, of the old stone monuments out on the plain below the eastern settlement. This might also explain why the eastern, and not the western settlement area, had small cairns associated with its boundaries, entrances and exits.

Looking at the map Henry noticed a large clutter free area a short distance to south of the shaman's hut (hut 3) and we decided to look at it on the way back to have lunch. Clambering over the clutter we entered an area of soft green closely clipped grass, remarkably free of stones and looked up-slope to the east. The visual impact was dramatic. Above us towered a series of large boulders forming a kind of natural amphitheatre. This area must have been deliberately cleared of stones to reinforce this visual effect. We had made a new discovery. Areas without rocks or hut circles or enclosure boundaries were highly significant. One way of creating a cultural environment at Leskernick was to construct the huts and the boundaries. Of equal importance was clearing areas of stones and in this case the reason was obvious- to reinforce the visual impact of large natural boulders. We approached the boulders and noticed some small stones, possibly deliberately collected, at their base- mostly now turf-covered and that the boulders themselves seemed to be enhanced by placing large flat stones around them. The small stones at the base reminded me of the Bodmin Tor cairns. Whether or not it could be classified as such, this must have constituted an important ritual and ceremonial focus located outside the domestic arena in the western settlement area. We seem to have discovered more about Leskernick in a few hours than during the entire previous week.

While we had been looking, we had been unable to see. It was almost as if the process of systematic recording of various features of the huts themselves had blocked us looking at them or attempting to understand them. Partly it was just pure ignorance. We simply did not know what to look for or what to record. Because 'everything' was potentially significant nothing became so. We had been so obsessed with the landscape, with the views from the hut doors, we had not really understood them at all or their immediate surroundings, even having made the attempt: the hut recording form of yesterday which now seemed even more inadequate than before.

The dull greyness, damp and drizzle did not matter any more. As far as I was concerned the sun was shining brightly down on Leskernick hill. Even if the huts only had blobs or cows living in them as yet, they now had shrines, shrine stones, niches and offering places. It became obvious that the place to excavate would be along the back of the hut walls.

We returned to have lunch on the cairn. Barbara was now back with Mary who now had an enormous John Silver like eye patch in place which looked quite bizarre. Lunch always took some considerable time: passing around the, by now, standard fare of bread rolls, tomatoes, cheese and salami, waiting for the single small spirits stove to go through its various stages of bubbling, shimmering and steaming (a new technical vocabulary had been invented to describe the various stages of water boiling) before tea or coffee could be served with delays caused by the fuel running out. The hot water had to be served in two or three shifts along with the coagulating dried milk powder stirred in with the tea and coffee with whatever implement came to hand-knife blade, stick or match end, the spoon having long since been lost in the depths of the cairn which also served as our excavation equipment store area. Brimming with enthusiasm I recounted the story of the discoveries of the morning: the hut shrines, ritualized western settlement as opposed to that to the east and the boulder shrine.

The excavation has now clearly revealed stone packing pits around the base of two of the uprights of the terminal setting. Probing has also shown that one of the terminal stones was significantly larger than the others, much longer than we thought, most of it being covered by vegetation. It is evident that there is something peculiar about the way the stones relate to their packing holes. They cannot have just fallen over but appear to have been moved to one side so that their short ends bear no obvious relationship to the sockets. Sue suggests that the terminal and the stone row may have been deliberately decommissioned or destroyed. This would explain the peculiar positions of the stones

in relation to their sockets and the generally shattered and diminutive state of the stone row itself and the scattering of stones now visible, many not in obvious alignment with the others. Some of the stones may have been deliberately pulled up and thrown to one side, others been knocked over or reduced to stumps. A similar argument could be used to account for the dilapidated state of the stone circles. We realised now that a connection could be made here with the broken back stone of the 'shrine' area in the shaman's hut and, a feature that we had noted but not really thought about, the fact that some other huts seemed to have their entrance areas deliberately blocked with the lintel stones pushed over to one side or crossed against each other at an angle so as to completely block passage through the entrance.

Of course subsequent activity (peat digging etc.) might have destroyed the stones in the row and circles. But this would hardly account for the signs of destruction in the settlement area that we had noticed. Now an extremely interesting possibility became apparent: that on abandonment the inhabitants of Leskernick deliberately destroyed the ritual monuments, symbolically, and literally, put their huts out of use to strangers. The place was not to be used again.

The weather brightens up literally in the afternoon. Dave Hooley comes to visit us and soon after a professor of pollen from Plymouth University with his research student and their families arrive. It is an incredibly good moment given the discoveries of the morning, fresh in our minds, and the fact that we seem to be understanding both the settlement and the stone row. We take them around the excavation and settlement area. Dave, in particular, is incredibly positive, with an enormous knowledge of Bodmin Moor. He thinks that some of the larger circular huts might well have been used for animals (neither Barbara and I are too happy with this thought) and points out what appears to be a clear driveway running up through the eastern settlement area. He says, just before leaving, that he will never look at hut circles the same way again after seeing Leskernick with us. We discuss with him other settlement areas on Bodmin where there might be a possibility of carrying out comparative studies. We are lucky in choosing Leskernick in that there is no evidence of any post Bronze Age settlement activity in the area so we don't have the problem of distinguishing between Bronze age and Medieval field structures and boundaries as in other areas of Bodmin Moor. The splendid isolation of the place since the Bronze Age is apparent. The pollen professor discovers a spring right outside the entrance to the western settlement area that would be suitable for taking pollen samples. We must have walked passed this boggy area on

numerous occasions! More and more bits of the jigsaw puzzle seem to be coming together.

Having 'found' shrines in the huts I become obsessed with the idea of the huts as ritual arenas the effect of which, became, I later realised, to push domestic activities out of sight. Perhaps the western settlement area was a ritual arena as opposed to the eastern one which was not? There might be a correlation between the height of the huts up the slopes of Leskernick Hill and their spiritual and ritual power. This might account for hut 20- large, high up the slope, with its enormous back stone and the shaman's hut which is also large and well up the slope and the only hut from which it is possible to see the tip of Rough Tor through the entrance. The summer solstice approaching I want the setting rays of the sun to shine through the entrance and strike the shrine area at the back. Another possibility might be that some of the huts were exclusively used for ritual activities and others not. A peculiarity we notice is that some of the huts have even floors well-levelled into the slope while others like huts 20 and 3 have impressive sizes/shrines/large backstones but with very uneven floors, rising to the back. This might be a case of microcosm mirroring macrocosm. Height was associated with sacredness so the higher up the hill the hut, the more spiritual power there would be. This would also mirrored, or emphasized, within some of the huts by the sloping floors terminating at the back shrine areas. It would not be very comfortable, after all, to live in a hut with sloping floors as we find on a daily basis while eating lunch on the cairn with things always falling down and having to be groped for in the morass of pegs and tools in its middle. Barbara takes vehement opposition to any suggestion of an opposition between ritual and day-to-day life experiences of kith and kin and hearth and home. She wants Leskernick to be normal, not some supposedly specialized ritual site supposedly set apart from normal activities like a megalith or a stone circle. I agree with this but the notion that some huts might be more symbolically potent than others and that some may have had specialized functions still stands I think. 'Normality' i.e. an integration between the two falsely opposed terms 'domestic' and 'ritual' does not require reducing the whole of Leskernick to a uniform sameness. Some huts are obviously different because of their location and size. Others- small and generally rectangular in shape- and often on the margins of the area, were never lived in. Some might have been guard huts, others for animals. The clear arrangement of huts in compound areas with well-defined walls, suggests a differentiation in use and the types of activities associated with them.

After our visitors have left we decide to investigate the field enclosure boundaries and large stones within the fields in the western settlement area more thoroughly. A few hours of wandering around convinces us that not only are there shrines at the back of most huts, every enclosure appears to have one or more 'shrines' within it. In some cases a number of enclosure walls run up to a particularly large boulder forming a focal point and thus emphasizing it. The enclosure boundaries also run up to and incorporate areas of clutter. Within the enclosures, in some cases areas of clutter may be cleared away, or alternatively, heaped up, around large stones. There were thus two alternative and contrasting ways to emphasize the significance of large rocks: by piling up clutter around them, or removing it. People must have been very aware of the form, nature and character of clutter. But were all large boulders emphasized, or only some? And might there be a relationship between boulder shape and whether it is culturally enhanced? The parallel field enclosure walls have the effect of channeling one's vision up to these large boulder 'shrines' which only really look impressive, or become obvious from below. Passage up the fields is passage up to one or a series of shrines usually it seems up-slope, towards their top ends. What, of course, is missing today at Leskernick is the network of pathways that must have run up through the enclosures and to the huts as well as a patchwork of tilled and grassy areas. Today we are only left with the contrast between grass and stone. The idea that the enclosures at Leskernick might be filled with boulder shrines reminds me of Trobriand gardening practices with small shrines at the four corners of the gardens or Munn's description of sacred heavy rocks which should not be removed in Gawan gardens and Battagalia's work on gardening in Sabarl. If every enclosure at Leskernick has one or more shrines within it there could be as many as fifty to two hundred field shrines in addition to those in the huts. But what were the fields with their enclosure walls used for: pasture, crops, simply as symbolic boundaries, to corral the movements of animals? Probably all and a mixture of these things. And how would one move in and around them and in and out of our huts? As with the huts, what we were seeing was the bones (stones) of these enclosure boundaries that must have had some kind of wattle superstructure to have been very effective as enclosures. Our investigations were seemingly creating far more questions than answers! Having appreciated, for the first time really, the significance of the enclosure boundaries, it seemed wrong somehow to have been clambering all over them during the past days, rather than tracing and following through the distinctive spaces they were demarcating.

All afternoon Barbara has been very irritable and grumpy, arguing all the time with almost any remark I make. I have never experienced her quite like this before and there is obviously something wrong, although I'm not sure what. For example, late in the afternoon, I say a good book title might be 'Learning to see at Leskernick' but she doesn't like this at all pouring scorn on the idea immediately for reasons that aren't very clearly stated. Reflecting on this I remembered that while in Bodmin Museum she had seen a literary account of the Moor describing 'those churlish hills' and immediately suggested this might make an excellent title. I'd tried not to be very negative about this despite thinking the description a typical piece of not very apposite Victorian melodrama.

Tomorrow is the longest day and we have to decide whether we are going to stay up all night so that we can see the sun rise over Leskernick or abandon the exercise and wait for the setting sun- assuming there is one. Is the rising or setting of the sun likely to be of more importance? Or will different features be emphasized, if any?

By the end of the afternoon the weather has closed in again. We chat on the track back off the moor. Barbara asks me what I'll be doing in Vanuatu. Apart from the fact I am going there I really don't have much idea but it suddenly strikes me it would be interesting to look at settlements and doorways. Barbara: "You can always manufacture a doorframe when you get there" Me: "I was rather hoping their huts would already have doors!". Barbara takes Pippa to Dartmoor to join the Dongas at Merrivale. She has lent Sue and I the key to her room so that we can use the shower. We realise what sumptuous luxury she has been living in: carpets, soft bed, chair, desk, electricity, hot and cold water. It remains cloudy and misty all evening. Barbara returns and we all sit up until 2 - 3 a.m. drinking wine on the campsite before deciding to abandon the whole drizzly exercise and go to bed. Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, things have got a little noisy.

Wednesday 21 June

We have to leave Bodmin Moor early tomorrow morning and are obviously not going to be able to finish either all the landscape recordings through the hut doors nor the excavation of the end of the stone row. Only a small area of the 15 m square area we deturfed has been excavated but it seems likely that we will reach the base of at least one stone socket at least. Disappointingly so far: no artefacts and no charcoal. As regards the landscape recording from the hut entrances we have completed the eastern settlement area but still have more work to do (ten huts or so in the west). Barbara admits to me during the course of the day that she was irritated yesterday that I found the shrine stones first.

But we are supposed to be cooperating, not competing with each other. Sue wasn't cross- at least about that. I still feel guilty about criticising the excavation and Sue takes it a bit too personally. The excavation, and my reaction to it, has actually been more a kind of symbolic encounter (especially as I haven't done much of the work and know very little about the way it is supposed to be done- the idea of there being an accepted procedure- straight rather than banana-shaped trenches- is part of the problem) rather than being connected with anything specific about what is going on, apart from the slowness which I am grudgingly willing to admit is probably necessary if there are to be any meaningful results.

Today the main task has to be backfilling in the excavation and replacing the turf so it isn't meaningful to attempt any more hut recording. In addition all the flags and pegs we have used to mark the huts on the settlement need to be removed and those on Codda settlement, the Beacon, along the stone row and other outlying cairns. A number of people have already left so the amount still to be done by the remaining six of us seems enormous. We also have to transport all the excavation equipment back down to the campsite. Peter Herring from the CAU is coming in the afternoon- somewhat unfortunately as all he is likely to see of the excavation is where it was. The final levels of one of the stone sockets still have to be excavated beneath the stone packing layer this morning. While Sue and Helen excavate and document this feature I wander off to take some photographs of the eastern and western settlement area and record cairn intervisibility before the flags are all removed. Barbara wanders around the eastern settlement area to have a think about it. By mid-morning we have both realised that it, too, is full of niches and shrine stones opposite the entrance which none of us had seen before. So the idea of the eastern part being a far less ritualized domestic space than the west was an obvious non-starter. In addition we began to notice shrines out in the fields and along the field boundaries. They appeared to be fewer and less dramatic than in the western settlement area, which might be expected anyway, as there was far less clutter than in the east.

After coffee we remove all the flags, and then the pegs. It now seems very sad to be doing this and to be leaving Leskernick. We are removing our markers from the landscape. The flags fluttering in the breeze seemed to bring life into the settlement and simultaneously turned it into a somewhat surreal contemporary work of art. Our flags, and their ephemeral appearance, apart from the practical reason for their existence were, in essence, little different from Christo's Umbrella's art project of 1991, involving the simultaneous erection of 1,340 blue

umbrellas in Ibaraki, Japan and 1,760 yellow umbrellas in California. Each umbrella was surrounded by a small platform, an invitation for people to sit beneath them and experience the light rippling through the fabric. The position of our white flags was predetermined so as to presence the hut circles of the past and make one more attentive to their interrelationships. Christo's umbrellas made people see the landscape in a new light (quite literally). Our flags made a presence out of the past: a kind of consolation for the failure of the prehistoric architecture. The fabric moving with the wind created a kind of continuous dynamic, the dynamic of movement of people, of all that was now lost amongst the stones. With their removal what our flags had revealed was gradually slipping back again into the wider landscape. The cairns and the stone circles and huts all disappeared one by one. The excavation area now also looked strange without its fence wrapping and little green door. Sue said that with the removal of the fence she had a striking sense of freedom, a feeling of escape from having been locked and enclosed within the world inside the fence, cut off from the hills and Tors beyond.

Backfilling is a rather backbreaking job. Peter Herring arrives just before the area with the fully excavated stone socket is to be covered so he is able to see the shape of the hole and the newly discovered earthen ramp (Sue or Helen's interpretation) on one side used to ease the upright into place. The socket has been beautifully excavated and itself, with various shades of black, brown, yellow and grey, in the profile, might be taken, like the flags to be an artwork. Like them, it is both more and less. Still no artefacts or charcoal (even a few white quartz pebbles at the base would have made me very happy), but somehow the shape and form of the stone hole compensated for their absence. And it was clear the stone had stood and we were dealing with what at the time of its construction and use would have been a quite substantial and impressive prehistoric monument.

Peter Herring helps with the re-turfing of the area. There are some turves left over which I take to conceal in the nearby leat. With the turf back in place the idea that we had actually excavated anything at all seemed near to fantasy. The weather has been variable all day. Clouds and mist have appeared periodically and blocked the view of the Tors and then rolled away and revealed them. One moment you can see the peak of Rough Tor from the lunch cairn and the next it has gone. This gives this peak, in particular, as so little of it is exposed on the skyline, a strange mystical quality, almost a floating effect. By contrast, the ridge of Brown Willy, jagged and gaunt seems to hold few surprises. It is either there and you can see it, or hidden in

mist- present or absent. Rough Tor can often not be seen when Brown Willy is visible. Sometimes it appears to be part of High Moor, at other times not. It has a chameleon-like presence which seems to be accentuated by the clouds and mist. This cannot have been lost on the inhabitants of Leskernick and reconfirms, for me, its symbolic potency. Towards the end of the day, with some excitement, we realise that we were going to experience a sunset on the solstice. We had not consciously planned to end the project on this day but it now seemed to be increasingly appropriate. But where would the dying rays of the sun shine? Over Rough Tor to fade on the shrine stone at the back of the Shaman's hut? In one of the stone circles or at the terminal setting of the stone row? I was torn between wanting to be in various places at the same time.

Peter Herring has come to find out whether the sun is going to set along the long axis of a possible long barrow he has discovered to the south-east of Leskernick on the lower slopes of the Beacon. He thinks that the long barrow might be aligned on a quoit-like structure near to the summit of Leskernick Hill to the east of and above hut 3. Here a large boulder has been placed on top of a natural rock outcrop and supported at one end to form a small hole, through which, to the south the stone circles, stone row and possible long barrow can be seen. We have all examined this quoit but remain dubious about its antiquity.

After the deturfing is over I go up with Peter to the top of the Beacon to check if three outlying small cairns can be seen from the Beacon cairns. This proves to be the case if you stand on the cairns themselves, now much denuded. Peter shows me his long barrow. It is rather irregular in form and I am not convinced.

The sun is fast going down. I make a decision to stay in the middle of the southern stone circle. The sun, extremely large and glowing wonderfully, looks most peculiar and magical, seeming to oscillate in size and surrounded by pale rings of light. It does not set in any significant way across the southern stone circle in relation to a horizon feature but Peter's quoit is by far the most visible and prominent point on Leskernick Hill. When the sun is gone I run to the top of Leskernick Hill to check whether it will shine through the gap in Peter's quoit as he has predicted. Quite amazingly it does so. The last flickers of light penetrate through the gap in the stone as the blood red sun falls behind Buttern Hill. Peter Herring has moved between the northern circle, the stone row terminal and his long barrow. Later he tells us that the sun does not set in any significant way in relation to a horizon feature in any of these places except at the long barrow where the rays of the sun shine through the gap in the quoit and almost shine along its long axis. Kath has been to the Shaman's hut but the effect we

wanted in relation to the shrine stone and Rough Tor does not occur. The sun has set much farther to the east. We return to the lunch cairn walking through the western and eastern settlements for the last time. The rocks have a wonderful rosy hue in the afterglow of the sun. We have never experienced Leskernick before at this time in the evening. The grey rocks, now pink, are completely transformed in the softness of the light. We see two contemporary inhabitants, a badger and a fox beginning their nightly journeys between the stones and find an uncollected peg in 'the hut with no number'.

The final task is to take back the excavation equipment to the campsite by hand and wheelbarrow 2 km across the moor across rough grass, stream, and on heavily rutted tracks, in near darkness. It is easier to shift the wheelbarrow back than it was when we arrived because the front tyre has been pumped up. Even so the task is such that one would not want to repeat it on a frequent basis. In other words, pretty hellish. Helen has already taken one wheelbarrow load down earlier in the day and is determined to take another. Henry and I take it in turns to barrow down the fencing poles and wood. Other people are festooned with buckets and sieves, flags and pegs. It must have been a truly bizarre sight if anyone had been on the Moor at night to observe the progress of this motley crew. Pippa had described to us earlier in the week the movements of the Donga tribe across Dartmoor, moving towards Merrivale for the solstice where she was to meet them, pushing all their possessions in hand carts. It struck me that our wheelbarrowing would constitute excellent training should we want to join them.

Back at the campsite we finish the dregs of last evening's solstice wine and have a visitation from the campsite owner who is irrate about the noise of the previous evening. Apologies made, we retire to our tents. I share mine with pickaxe, mattock, sledgehammer, saw and trowel. The latter is now rusty. No doubt Sue's is glinting in her tent in the moonlight. A nightly rustling sound emanates from her tent: the sound of an evening ritual seemingly involving the emptying and filling of countless plastic bags.

Thursday 22 June

We spend the morning sorting out the equipment between us, loading the converted ice cream van and car. Sue and I fit ourselves in around the fencing poles which she has arranged with pointed ends facing forward with equal numbers on either side so as to ensure a rather painful death for both of us should anything happen. The wheelbarrow secured to the roof we drive slowly back to Dorset. Having become so accustomed to the craggy Tors of Bodmin the Dorset landscape appears to be so soft,

rounded, domestic and subdued. Today I obtain the keys to my new house. Perhaps appropriately, the first objects to be moved in come straight from Leskernick: the wheelbarrow off the roof of the car and the mobile door frame.